



Spring Grand Ceremony

We extend to you a cordial invitation to attend the Spring Grand Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami on **Thursday, April 13, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.** The event will feature a testimonial by **Mrs. Trisha Teruko Adkison**, and a Naorai fellowship dinner will be included in the service.

Your attendance at this event would be greatly appreciated as it will serve as a testimony to the blessings you have received through your faith practice. Additionally, the service will be livestreamed on Facebook for those who cannot attend in person.

My Thoughts about Artificial Intelligence (AI)

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano (Head Minister)

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our daily lives, including our church and social functions. As a result, we have been live streaming our church services almost every Sunday since 2020. This has been a new experience for the faith community who may not have imagined being able to witness church services remotely. Despite the challenges, we have adapted and followed the rules of society to remain functional. However, we must also listen and follow the authority to avoid taking consequential responsibilities for our actions. During the pandemic, people responded differently - some followed the voices of authorities, while others listened to their inner voices and acted on their own conscientious decisions. Through these experiences, we have come to appreciate the actions we once took for granted in our normal lives.

Nowadays, Open AI and artificial intelligence are ubiquitous topics when we turn on the TV or connect to the internet and smartphones. This new wave is constantly expanding and has the potential to affect everyone. It is like a tidal wave of artificial intelligence that could potentially overwhelm us, leaving us with no means of escape.

As someone who uses the application, I find it both interesting and overwhelming. As part of my job, I enjoy translating Japanese text into English, although I am not a professional translator and do not get paid for my work directly. Edna sensei has been helping me with my translations for the past 35 years for the publication of the church newsletters every month. In a way, she has been my artificial intelligence, transforming my rough translations into readable forms. I am grateful for her contribution.

Recently, she used Open AI to edit my translated material and was surprised at how helpful it was in easing her editorial tasks. She also tried to convert her English speech into Japanese, and although it wasn't perfect, it was still understandable.

I wonder what would happen if AI keeps improving without any limitations. Would our whole lives become entirely dependent on AI, providing almost perfect responses for any element in our lives? Would we be able to send a message of request and receive idealistic answers without having to learn much at school? Would we become empty shells that need to be filled with perfect information available for anything we want to know? Who would enjoy being an empty shell with little self-learned knowledge and wisdom? These are some of the questions that come to mind.

In the future, AI may replace the main function of Konko faith, which is Toritsugi-Mediation. This function could be easily fulfilled by AI, which shows no discrimination against people and provides perfect answers to requests. However, this raises concerns about the need for human interactions in religious functions. The 4th Konko-Sama, Kagamitaro Konko, believed that expressing gratitude for everything that takes care of us is important to create a heart that prevails peace.

While AI may become incredibly powerful and helpful, it is essential to question whether we express gratitude for its assistance. Since all the information AI uses is accumulated by human learning, it is appropriate to show appreciation for the work of humanity. However, the relationship with Kami is not

based on human needs and wants, but rather the belief that Kami is the Life Force that sustains all existence in the world and the universe. It is essential to consider the potential consequences of relying too heavily on AI in religious practices and in our daily lives, where it may become the ultimate convenience for humanity. As AI evolves and surpasses human intelligence, we must not forget the importance of human interactions and our relationship with Kami.

As my daughter Edna Sensei was editing this memo of mine with the help of OpenAI, the program responded to her in this manner: "It's interesting to see how AI can provide quick and convenient access to information, but as you pointed out, it's important to remember that the relationship with Kami and the spiritual realm is not based solely on human needs and wants." What an interesting response from OpenAI.

Regarding the Spring Grand Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami, I asked OpenAI what the significance of the Grand Ceremony was in the Konkokyo tradition, and it stated, "The Grand Service is a major annual event in the Konko faith that celebrates the divine energy and spirit that flows through all things, represented by Tenchi Kane No Kami. The service includes prayers, offerings, and expressions of gratitude for the blessings of nature and the spiritual realm." Its response was surprisingly accurate!

Konko-Sama said...

Konko Daijin said, "People have often wondered why a man who is honest, doesn't do anything bad to others, and is like a kami or buddha, is often afflicted with many misfortunes. This is because he has somehow shown irreverence to Kami. [GIII: Jinkyu Kyogoroku/ed. Kataoka, Jiro:105.1]

2 No matter how honest and good he is, he is apt to commit irreverence to Kami if he does not practice faith. There is a difference between having a good personality and showing reverence to Kami." [GIII:Jinkyu Kyogoroku/ed. Kataoka, Jiro:105.2]

3 No matter how good he is, if he doesn't practice faith, he will not receive divine blessings. [GIII: Jinkyu Kyogoroku/ed. Kataoka, Jiro:105.3]



Honoring the Mitama Spirits

April

Shinichi Furushima	4/30/1996
Yoshiro Kamitono	4/16/2000
Robert Mendoz	4/27/2006
Gilbert Toshio Iwasa	4/9/1999
Kiku Takahashi	4/26/1967
Zenji Takahashi	4/12/1966
Frances Shigeno Takahashi	4/13/2009
Richard Yoji Noguchi	4/28/2017
Rev. Masato Yoshino	4/30/2021
Alyce Yoshie Yamamoto	4/12/2022
Jean Fusae Noguchi	4/17/2022



If you wish to have a name added to the church Mitama listing or removed, please contact Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.

Bulletin Board

Church Services for April 2023

- 1 Sat -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 2 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Honolulu Church Grand Service (11 am)
- 9 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Waipahu Church Grand Service (11 am)
- 13 Thr -**Spring Grand Service (6 am)**
Naorai lunch will follow
- 16 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 23 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
- 30 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

May 2023

- 1 Mon -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 p)

Announcements:

●Monthly Volunteer Activity at St. Francis

The next activity will be on Fri, April 7 @ 10 am

●KMH Kyoten Study Group via Zoom

The main reference book will be "Voice of the Universe." Please join the study session and deepen your understanding about the messages of the Founder on April 5 & 19 (Wed. from 5 pm to 6 pm)
ZOOM ID: 815 2952 9465 **PASS:** 914385

●KMH CEOC Meeting

ZOOM on Friday, April 14, 2023 (3 pm)

●KMH Minister's Gathering

ZOOM on Saturday, April 15, 2023 (2-4 pm)

The Life of the Founder

金光教祖の生涯 瀬戸三喜雄 金光教学研究所 紀要別冊教学叢書 2

The following is an English translation of a book titled, "Konko Kyoso no Shougai" or "The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin" authored by the Rev. Mikio Seto, and was published by Konkokyo Theological Research Center. The publication was made in 1980. There are many biographies about the life of the Founder Konko Daijin. I would like to introduce this article for your reference in your pursuit of faith. An English translation was provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. (Page 88 to 92) (continued from the previous issue)

Kane No Kami Shitaba No Ujiko

In 1858, Bunji approached the altar to pray and inexplicably raised his hands to the posture of prayer and clapped once. Clapping hands was seen as a way to enter into prayer with Kami, and it was believed that those without enough virtuous power should not clap needlessly. According to Tomie Takahashi, Bunji had never clapped his hands during prayer before, and even when he visited village shrines and temples, his hand-held fan would shake involuntarily when he prayed. As he journeyed to visit his younger brother Shige`emon for the New Year's greeting in Kameyama, Bunji wondered about these unusual experiences.

Shige'emon received a divine message and conveyed it to Bunji: "During the Year of the Dog, you prayed to Toshi-toku-jin and clapped your hands once, but hesitated to continue. Actually, it was Kami who allowed your hands to clap as you faced Kami." Shige'emon continued, "Bunji, you have followed my words and shown reverence for me as Kami. I am pleased. To reward your reverence, Kane No Kami will allow you to clap your hands in prayer. When you worship a kami, do not discriminate between other village kamis or small and large shrines. Bow and clap your hands in prayer whenever you pass in front of a shrine." This message granted Bunji the privilege to clap his hands in prayer and be recognized as a faithful believer of Kane No Kami. Bunji, who had been experiencing hardships and misfortunes, received a divine message through his younger brother Shigeemon. The message stated that Kami had allowed Bunji to clap his hands in prayer and recognized him as a faithful believer. Shigeemon further advised Bunji to pray to Kami for all things and assured him that doctors and shamanistic

practitioners would be unnecessary for him. Additionally, Shige`emon informed Bunji that his wife would give birth on either February 18 or March 2. From that moment on, Kami responded to all of Bunji's requests and protected his life. Bunji felt grateful for being unexpectedly blessed by Kami and had nothing more to ask for. He was admitted as a faithful and trusting believer and recognized as "Kane No Kami Shitaba no Ujiko".

The phrase "You have followed My words and revered Me as Kami" holds a significant meaning. This was exemplified in an episode where Kamei requested Bunji to assist with the construction of a shrine at Shige`emon's residential property. Upon visiting Kameyama, Bunji encountered Shige`emon who was disoriented spiritually and being possessed by Konjin. The neighboring people deemed Konjin to be an evil deity and attempted to confine it. However, Bunji already recognized Konjin as a Kami worthy of reverence. Later on, Bunji realized that anybody can become insane when Kami-Sama possesses them, and he interpreted Shige`emon's stage of insanity as a way for Kami to get his attention. Bunji never hesitated to fulfill any of Kami's requests for Shigeemon, who did not recall being possessed by Kami. Moreover, Bunji not only provided financial assistance for the shrine's construction, but he also showed reverence to Konjin whom Shige`emon worshipped. Additionally, Bunji gave Shige`emon the necessary items and gifts for celebration. Kami recognized Bunji's sincere heart and respect towards Kami.

Later on, the Kami's request for Bunji to finance the construction of a shrine on Shige`emon's property was referred to as "Konko Daigongen saves people from their troubles and teaches the troubles road to relief. This year marks the eleventh year since Kami first requested your assistance" (Oboegaki 15-8-6). This episode of "Kami no Tanomi Hajime" marked the beginning of Kami's trust in Bunji to carry out His will for His purposes. The relationship between Kami and Bunji began to form and evolve as Bunji fulfilled Kami's request to help Shige`emon. Kami identified Bunji's nature of fulfilling His request as a way to continue fulfilling His requests thereafter.

Kami responded to Bunji's sincere acceptance of His request in an extraordinary manner, establishing a confidence in him to fulfill His will in the future. Kami may have had high expectations for Bunji in

carrying out His purposes, as evidenced by the allowance of hands-clapping for worship, which could be seen as a manifestation of Kami's confidence in him.

Kami's request for Bunji to finance the construction of a shrine at Shige`emon's property marked the beginning of a trusting relationship between them. This episode of "Kami no Tanomi Hajime" was significant as it initiated the relationship between Kami and Bunji, who fulfilled Kami's will without hesitation. Kami established a confidence in Bunji to render His will, and the allowance for clapping of hands for worship gave Bunji an opportunity to step into a new path in his pursuit of faith. Bunji learned to direct his prayer only to Konjin (Kane No Kami), who would respond to any requests from Bunji, enabling him to dodge any hardships in life. Kami granted Bunji the status of "Kane No Kami Shitaba No Ujiko," which gave him a special protective consideration and advanced status as a believer of Kami. This title showed Kami's expectation that Bunji would evolve into a savior in fulfilling Kami's purpose.

The name "Kane No Kami" was coined by Bunji and began to show up in the writing of Oboecho in January of 1858. Shige`emon adhered to using "Konjin" even after learning the name of "Kane No Kami," which reflected Bunji's acknowledgement of the nature of Kami that could not be more expansive than the nature of Konjin.

Bunji was eagerly awaiting the divine message that was to be revealed through the mouth of Shige`emon. In preparation, he reconstructed the altar for Kane No Kami and practiced clapping his hands in prayer multiple times. He believed that through this practice, he could better understand Kami's responses to his requests. Eventually, he experienced the moment when Kami directly responded to his prayers. This pivotal moment led Bunji to pursue a new faith life as an independent individual, separate from the faith practice of Shige`emon. His faith evolved to the point of "Mishinogi" (doing things on one's own), in which he could communicate directly with Kane No Kami and receive a direct response.

Meanwhile, Shige`emon's engagement with the faith practice was not established as a religious entity. Rather, people saw it as one of many temporary fads. As a result, there was no concrete relationship

between Shige`emon and Bunji with regard to the continuation of religious traditions, and no master-disciple relationship existed between the two. As Shige`emon had foretold, Tose gave birth to a baby girl on the evening of January 17, whom they named Kono.

Snapshots in March 2023



On March 6, 2023, Rev. Yasuhiro Yano performed the blessing ceremony for the new Santa Fe Internment Camp exhibition at The Hawaii's Plantation Village's in Waipahu.



Dr. Yukifumi Makita (Associate Professor of Fukuyama City University) and Dr. Naoe Kawamoto (Associate Professor of Hiroshima University) visited our church on March 13, 2023 for an interview regarding the Ageing Population of Japanese Immigrants to Hawaii and their concerns of the future. They have been conducting interviews with dozens of people throughout Hawaii.